



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## MWRD to fund seven green infrastructure projects in 2022

*Projects shield communities from flooding, improve public spaces*

Green alleys and parking lot investments will be on the rise in 2022 thanks to a program the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) offers to support and fund green infrastructure and community resilience throughout Cook County.

The MWRD selected a new round of projects that incorporate permeable surfaces to help mitigate flooding, protect area water quality and improve public spaces, as part of the MWRD's Green Infrastructure Program.

Following a call for submissions last summer and a detailed review process, the MWRD has selected seven projects represented by municipalities and one school district. Construction for the projects range in price from \$89,000 to \$1.5 million, each benefiting a range of nearby structures, from five to as many as 138. Combined, these seven projects will mitigate flooding for 466 structures and provide the capacity to retain more than 800,000 gallons of water per rain event.

"These projects call for different green infrastructure solutions to soak up more water and prevent it from overwhelming local sewers, basements, waterways and streets throughout Cook County," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. "We thank local governments and community partners for submitting applications and sharing in our mission to mitigate flooding and protect our water environment."



*A green alley in Harwood Heights, funded by the MWRD, collects precipitation where it falls by detaining and infiltrating runoff to prevent it from overwhelming sewers and flooding communities. The MWRD will contribute additional funds to expand green alleys in Calumet City, Des Plaines, Lyons and Maywood among other community projects in 2022.*

During this call for projects, MWRD engineers evaluated 32 proposals, ranking the eligible projects based on factors such as the total retention gallons, number of benefiting structures, median income of the community, project visibility and outreach, flooding prevalence, maintenance capability, and separate or combined sewer area that caters to both sanitary and stormwater. As more funding becomes available, additional projects may be considered. Project applicants that were not selected have been notified if they are still eligible for consideration or urged to apply for future selection under MWRD's Green Infrastructure Program.

Green infrastructure mimics the natural environment by capturing water and allowing it (*continued*)

## MWRD to fund seven green infrastructure projects in 2022, *cont.*

to infiltrate into the ground before it enters the traditional conveyance system. This helps to reduce the amount of water flowing through the gray infrastructure of pipes that can be overwhelmed by intense rain events. These projects can also reduce wet weather flows to combined sewer systems, reduce combined sewer overflows to local waterways, and protect water quality in these vital waterways. Green infrastructure also reduces runoff volumes and improves water quality in separate sewer service areas. In addition, green infrastructure can make public spaces more attractive and provide social benefits that enhance the livability of communities.

“We are grateful for the number of submissions that entered this year’s call for green infrastructure projects, and we look forward to working with our local partners to complete the projects selected for MWRD funding,” said MWRD Commissioner Mariyana T. Spyropoulos. “These green infrastructure practices are sustainable solutions that can collect more runoff, improve our local water quality and help us reduce flooding.”

In 2015, the MWRD adopted a Green Infrastructure Plan to increase the acceptance and investment of green infrastructure practices throughout Cook

County. Since that time, the MWRD has partnered with dozens of municipalities to fund projects such as rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement systems, and rainwater harvesting systems.

The MWRD intends to provide partial funding towards the construction of the selected green infrastructure installations on public property. The MWRD Board of Commissioners voted unanimously on Nov. 4, 2021, to authorize negotiations for intergovernmental agreements (IGA) with project partners to define funding and other project requirements. Project partners will be expected to provide long-term operation and maintenance of the installed green infrastructure practices. Where applicable, the IGAs will also require that the goals of the MWRD’s Minority-owned Business Enterprises, Women-owned Business Enterprises, Small Business Enterprises and Veteran-owned Business Enterprises be met for the MWRD-funded portion of the project. Once the partners agree in principle, MWRD staff will seek authority from the MWRD Board of Commissioners to enter the individual IGAs.

For a complete list and description of the MWRD’s selected green infrastructure projects, see below:

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Project/description</b>
Calumet City	Calumet City Green Alleys Project
City of Countryside	Countryside Park Parking Improvements
City of Des Plaines	Pervious Concrete Alley Improvements
Village of Lyons	Green Alley Program
Village of Maywood	Green Infrastructure Alley Improvements
Village of Oak Lawn*	Detention Basin Naturalization
River Trails School District 26	River Trails Middle School Green Infrastructure Improvements

\* *Monitoring of the proposed basin naturalization enhancements will be done to quantify stormwater benefits and serve as a demonstration project.*

### ***Recovering Resources, Transforming Water***

*Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at [mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org).*